

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 OES-05 ACDA-10 OMB-01 NRC-07 ERDA-07 IO-11

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R 221300Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3570

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 1136

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR IN PINT

SUBJECT: THE PRIME MINISTER ON THE CONSTITUTION

THE PRESS AND ASIAN SECURITY

REF: A) NEW DELHI 1134

B) NEW DELHI1135

1. PRIME MINISTER GANDHI ELABORATED A NUMBER OF HER
FAVORITE TOPICS IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AFP WHICH WAS PUBLISHED
IN THE INDIAN PRESS ON JANUARY 22. MRS. GANDHI SAID SHE FAVORED
RETAINING THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS,
PRESENTED HER VIEWS ON A "RESPONSIBLE PRESS," AND REITERATED THE
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GOI POSITION ON COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN ASIA. SHE ALSO VIGOROUSLY

DEFENDED THE EMERGENCY, CRITICIZED THE OPPOSITION, AND SAID THAT INDIA HAD GROWN STRONGER ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY IN THE TEN YEARS SHE HAS HELD OFFICE.

2. ASKED ABOUT THE POWERS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, MRS. GANDHI SAID SHE FAVORED THE PRESENT CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM WITH PERHAPS SOME MODIFICATIONS. "BUT IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF THE EXECUTIVE GETTING MORE POWER AS AGAINST THE LEGISLATURE PLUS THE EXECUTIVE TO BE ABLE TO FUNCTION MORE EFFECTIVELY. AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM IS WHETHER THE JUDICIARY CAN NEGATIVE ESSENTIAL MEASURES OF SOCIAL REFORM AND ECONOMIC EGALITARIANISM. THIS IS ALSO A PROBLEM." THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT FAVOR PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM, ADDING THAT "POWER SHOULD NOT BE CONCENTRATED BUT WITH THE PEOPLE." SHE ADDED THAT INDIA IN EFFECT HAD A FEDERAL SYSTEM, POINTING OUT THAT SOME OF THE STATES HAD OPPOSITION GOVERNMENTS. SHE SAID SHE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE GOOD RELATIONS WHICH PERTAINED BETWEEN THE STATES AND THE CENTER.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER ASSERTED THAT THE SUSPENSION OF ARTICLE 19 OF THE CONSTITUTION "DOES NOT MEAN TAKING AWAY FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS." "THAT WAS NECESSARY ONLY BECAUSE OF CERTAIN CASES WHICH ARE IN THE COURTS BY CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.

4. MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT INDIA DOES NOT FAVOR ANY KIND OF MILITARY ARRANGEMENT OR BLOCS IN ASIA, ADDING THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE SOVIET UNION ON COLLECTIVE SECURITY FOR ASIA. SHE SAID THAT IT WOULD SERVE LITTLE PURPOSE TO SPECULATE UPON THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE COURSE OF SINO-SOVIET OR SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS OR TO LINK THESE IN ANY WAY WITH THE IDEA OF ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION HAS NO POLITICAL OVERTONES OR UNDERTONES AND IN NO WAY LIMITS INDIA'S FREEDOM OF DECISION OR NON-ALIGNMENT.

5. MRS. GANDHI REITERATED HER POSITION ON THE FOURTH ESTATE, ASSERTING THAT THE PRESS MUST HAVE A FEELING OF RESPONSIBILITY. SOME OF THE INDIAN PAPERS, SHE COMMENTED, WERE DELIBERATELY UNCLASSIFIED

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SPREADING ALARM AND DESPONDENCY, AND BUILDING UP THE OPPOSITION. MOST OF THE PRESS SHE SAID WERE CONTROLLED BY BIG BUSINESS AND NOT INDEPENDENT. SOME WERE ALSO WESTERN ORIENTED AND NOT NECESSARILY REPORTING THINGS RELEVANT TO INDIA. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID "FORTUNATELY THE MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE DO NOT READ THE NEWSPAPERS AND WERE NOT TAKEN IN BY THEM." SCHNEIDER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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